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June 15, 2007

The Honorable Matt Blunt, Governor  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol, Room 216  
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Dear Governor Blunt:

On June 13, 2007, I joined United States Attorney John F. Wood in announcing the indictment of seven Missouri residents on federal charges of fraud and identity theft. This was the culmination of an 18-month investigation my office initiated and handled with the assistance of multiple federal agencies. The Defendants stole the identities of many mid-Missourians, including mentally disabled group home residents. They used the stolen identities to establish phone service for inmates in Missouri correctional facilities. Two of these Defendants were state employees; they used their access to Missourians' sensitive information contained in your Department of Revenue to further this scheme.

On the day we announced these charges, I received a letter from your Chief of Staff, Ed Martin, making allegations and statements regarding the manner in which federal and state law enforcement officers handled the arrest of Robin Deardorff.

Allow me to set the record straight on the arrest of Ms. Deardorff: On June 4, 2007, our investigators contacted the Department of Social Services to inform it of the impending arrest of Ms. Deardorff. In discussion with the Department, state and federal law enforcement officials agreed upon a plan to arrest Ms. Deardorff at her place of employment because it was a controlled setting that would minimize any security risk. At the close of this conversation, the Department and law enforcement officials were in agreement that Ms. Deardorff would be arrested at the Department office.

On June 13, an investigator from my office, accompanied by a special agent with the United States Secret Service and an inspector from the U.S. Postal Service, arrived at

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the Department office to arrest Ms. Deardorff as planned. A Department employee informed the agents, for the first time, that Ms. Deardorff had been fired on June 11. The plan for a secure arrest in a controlled setting – to which the Department and law enforcement had agreed – was no longer viable. With no other choice, the agents enlisted the assistance of the Kansas City Police Department and proceeded to Ms. Deardorff's home, where they entered and arrested her.

Now that you have the facts, you know why I am writing. I do not appreciate your Chief of Staff giving my office "directives" and impugning the work of my investigators and our partners at the federal level, as he did in his letter.

The claims you have made that these agents endangered workers at the Department of Social Services ignore the fact that law enforcement called the Department well in advance of the arrest to both brief them on the status of the matter and to discuss with them the plan for a secure arrest.

The law enforcement professionals who built this case over 18 months broke up an identity theft ring that had permeated two state offices and the Missouri Department of Corrections and victimized vulnerable mid-Missourians to the tune of \$80,000 in unwanted telephone charges. The investigators in this office who worked this case, and those from the federal government who assisted, deserve our thanks and commendation for a job well done. They do not deserve to be labeled "unprofessional" by a member of the governor's staff. Nor do they deserve to be fatuously accused of endangering workers in state offices.

I am pleased that the arrests of Ms. Deardorff and her co-defendants were successful, and I do not want to see another arrest hindered by individuals or agencies that refuse to agree to cooperate with law enforcement.

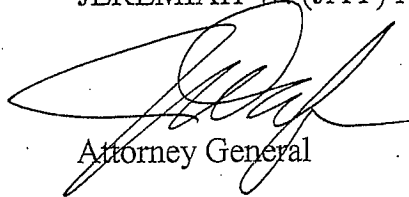
We will continue to work hard with our colleagues at the local, state, and federal levels to protect Missourians from crimes like identity theft. Our cause is not served by a member of your staff lobbying unfounded accusations and trying to pass off inaccurate statements as fact. Nor is it served by state departments whose uncooperative actions in this matter could have compromised the work of law enforcement officers.

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I am asking you to join us in the fight to prosecute and prevent these crimes by ordering all of your department directors to cooperate with law enforcement professionals from every agency and every level of government.

Sincerely,

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON



Attorney General

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